

# **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT RECORD EASTERN INTERIOR RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

***Meeting Location:*** Miners Hall, Chicken, Alaska

***Meeting Date:*** June 24, 2008

***Purpose:*** Identify public issues and concerns with BLM managed lands in the Eastern Interior Planning Area.

***Number of public in attendance:*** 16

***BLM personnel in attendance:*** Lenore Heppler (Manager), Jeanie Cole (Planning), Brad Colin (Recreation) and Larry Jackson (Minerals).

## ***Meeting format:***

**3-5 pm:** Attendees were introduced to why we are doing a new RMP, what an RMP does, and given examples of decisions that might come out of an RMP through a power point presentation. BLM staff answered questions. Participants were asked to express their concerns and issues with BLM-managed public lands.

**Handouts:** An Interested Party letter explaining the types of decisions made in the RMP and giving an overview of the initial steps in planning was available. A set of frequently asked questions, copies of the existing Management Framework Plan for the Fortymile, the Fortymile Wild and Scenic River Plan, and brochures on the Fortymile management unit and the 17b easement process were also available. A scoping comment sheet that could either be filled out at the meeting or returned to BLM at a later date was also available.

## ***Issues/Questions/Concerns:***

### ***Navigability:***

- The State and BLM disagree on navigability determinations on the Mosquito Fork. BLM should recognize the Mosquito Fork as navigable so there will not be this conflict between the two determinations.
- BLM and the State should use the same criteria for navigability and apply them the same way.
- This disagreement between the State and BLM puts the miner in the middle.
- BLM should have another public meeting in Chicken, with a navigability specialist to explain the criteria and how the State and BLM differs.
- Other sections of the Fortymile River should be addressed regarding navigability determinations.

**Wild and Scenic Rivers:**

- Congress did not specify a classification for the Mosquito Fork from Ingle Creek to the Taylor Highway so it should be open to mining under State mining claims because it is not designated.

**Withdrawals and Mining:**

- Is that the intention of the BLM to lift some of the ANCSA D1 withdrawals?
- As much of the area as possible should be available for mineral entry.
- The withdrawals on the Mosquito Fork need to be at least looked at and considered for removal. We would like to see it navigable and open to mining.
- Dredging is one of the lowest impact forms of mining there is and prohibiting dredging on the Mosquito Fork does not make sense. Because these are resources that could be exploited in a very reasonable fashion without leaving a visible mark on the scenery. It seems backwards that dredging is not allowed.
- Long-term camping on the wild river segments needs to be addressed. Suction dredgers are being forced to camp below mean ordinary high water mark. This is not good for water quality or environmental reasons. BLM needs to resolve this so they can have long-term camps back from the river.
- There are sometimes individual BLM employees coming out and trying to tell people, especially people that are dredging, things that they should or should not be doing that are not according to what is publicly known as BLM policy. Maybe the new plan could have some language with regards to what exactly is the authority of the individual officers on the ground. What is their exact authority?

**Visitor Services:**

- The interpretive panels at the BLM waysides along the Taylor Highway are confusing. They need to clearly state what is or is not allowed regarding recreational mining and other things.
- There should be areas for recreational mining.
- High banking should be allowed under recreational mining.
- There are lots of vehicles parked along the road during hunting season. BLM does not do anything to them. BLM should make them get parking permits.
- The rest stop on the Mosquito Fork needs a trashcan. People leave a lot of trash lying around all over.
- A lot of people come up from Anchorage to hunt in this area. The hunting seasons are too short because there are so many people, the harvest goals are met quickly. Last year caribou season opened on Friday and closed on Monday.

**Access:**

- The plan should address some of the RS2477 issues in the area. We have a lot of trails and a lot of them are very old and very well documented. We encourage the BLM to take another look at some of these trails.